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presence of two hostile powers, one to be gradually raised into the ascendent over the other. It is necessary above all things, in such a situation, never to lose a battle."

3. "*Seize the very first possible opportunity to act on every resolution you make and on every emotional prompting you may experience in the direction of the habits you aspire to gain.*" When you have decided that you will form a good habit or break a bad one, don't put off action, but begin at once. "Hell is paved with good intentions."

4. "*Keep the faculty of effort alive in you by a little gratuitous exercise every day.*" "That is, be systematically heroic in little unnecessary points, do every day

or two something for no other reason than its difficulty so that when the hour of dire need draws nigh, it may find you are not unnerved and untrained to stand the test." I recall hearing a famous university football coach tell a group of high-school boys that he made it a practice occasionally to give up drinking coffee of which he was fond, not because he thought it harmful but that he might have this valuable practice in self-denial. In what other ways might you apply this in your own case?

Suggestions for further study: What are some of the bad habits to which the boys of your town, or school are addicted? What are some of the habits which you could acquire to advantage?

MODERN THEOLOGY AND THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL

III. THE GOD OF THE CHRISTIAN

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In the last article we considered the first of the three great questions of religion, the question of the source of religious faith, or the seat of authority in religion. We asked ourselves why we need a Bible, and we found that we need it for two reasons. In the first place, we need it as a source of religious inspiration and instruction for the individual soul; and in the second place, as a standard of faith and practice for the church. We

asked ourselves how the older view of the Bible met this double need, and we saw that it met it by providing an infallible book, inerrant in all its parts, equally trustworthy in its history, its chronology, its science, and its religion, equally adapted, therefore, in all its parts to be used as a standard of faith and life. We saw further that in the practical application of this method difficulties were encountered. There were

apparent inconsistencies in the teaching of the different parts of the Bible. What it had to say concerning God and man and sin and salvation was differently understood by different people, and the problem of reconciling these differences was a formidable one. In theory each man was free to interpret the Bible for himself, but in practice a more definite principle was necessary. So the tradition and creed of the church was added to the Bible as the practical standard by which men's faith and life were judged.

Now, if all men had been members of one church this method would have worked well enough, but as a matter of fact they were not. There were different churches differing in creed and in tradition, each appealing to the same Bible in justification of their claim. Who is to judge when doctors disagree?

Here modern theology comes to our aid, for it gives us a point of view which enables us to understand these differences and to see how they may be made helps rather than hindrances. In the first place, it calls attention to the human element in the Bible. It shows us that it is a composite book consisting of very different materials brought together by men of different degrees of maturity and of insight through a long period of time. As a result of this it shows us, in the second place, that not all parts of the Bible stand on the same spiritual level. The Bible is the record of a progressive revelation in which God has been using the means which lay nearest at hand to train mankind for his full and complete revelation in Jesus Christ.

Now, this view of the Bible is helpful to us in two ways. It is helpful, in the

first place, because it brings out more clearly than the older view the variety of contents in the Bible, and its fitness to minister to very different needs. The Bible, we must always remember, was given, not simply for men of the twentieth century, but for men of the first as well, and it had to be written, therefore, in language which could be understood by those to whom it came. And we today, ministering as we do to men of different grades of spiritual experience and culture, find this variety of content in the Bible of immense practical help in our work as preachers.

But in the second place and more important, modern theology points out the supreme importance of Jesus Christ as the unifying element in the Bible and as the standard by which all its teaching must be tested. It shows us how the earlier parts of the Bible are to be understood as the steps by which God has been preparing the way for him, and the later portions as the first fruits of the new spirit of liberty which he had promised to his church. So it recovers for spiritual uses and spiritual authority parts of the Bible which apart from this key would be full of difficulty, and justifies the historic judgment of the church that it is an inspired, that is, an authoritative, book.

But the Bible, after all, is only the beginning of religion. It is the book to which we go to find out what we ought to believe. Today I want to consider more in detail what it is that the Bible gives us. From the source of faith we pass to its content.

The answer can be given in a single word. The object of faith is God. God is the subject of the Bible from

Genesis to Revelation, and every question of practical religion with which it deals has its roots finally in the view which is taken of him. It is no minor or unimportant subject, therefore, which is to engage our attention, but one which brings us into the very heart and inner shrine of religion. The oldest and yet the newest, the most profound but the most practical, the most exhaustless, yet the most necessary of all the subjects to which the mind of man can be directed, or with which the heart of man can be concerned, is God.

The method which I propose to follow in the present discussion is the same which has already proved helpful in our treatment of our former subject. I shall ask, in the first place, why we need God at all. In the second place, I shall ask how the theologians of the past thought of God as meeting this need. In the third place, I shall ask what contribution modern theology has to make to our idea of God. And finally, I shall ask what effect we may expect this contribution to have upon the religious life.

Why, then, do we need God? We have never seen him, we have never heard him, we have never touched him. There are wise men who have questioned whether he exists at all, or if he exists, whether we can know anything definite about him. Yet in every age men have gone on believing in God, and the belief has powerfully affected their conduct. What is the explanation of this fact? What need, I repeat, is satisfied by faith in God?

I answer, we need God for two reasons. In the first place, we need him in order that we may have some-

thing to worship, and in the second place, we need him in order that we may have someone to give us help.

You will notice that I have put the need of worship first. That is not the order which is most familiar, at least in our non-liturgical churches. Worship holds a subordinate place in our scheme of religion. We make place for it, to be sure; we have our hymns and our prayer, but in our estimate of values these hold a subordinate place. We speak of them often (even those of us who are ministers) as the preliminary exercises. Our attention is concentrated upon the sermon as the central feature in the morning's service. We claim to be practical men, and we commend religion because of what it can do for us. It is the helpfulness of God which gives him his chief value in our eyes.

But more careful reflection will convince us that this is a superficial view. The greatest thing that God can do for any of us is simply to be himself. More than any specific thing which he can do *for us* is that which he is *to us*. We need God, I repeat, most of all in order that we may have something to worship, and by that I mean something to look up to, something of which we can feel that it is higher, more powerful, more resourceful, more inspiring, more satisfying and ennobling than we. To have a God is to have an ideal and to know that, however far I may fall below my own standard, or my neighbor may fall below his, or all men together may fall below theirs, still somewhere and somehow the ideal is realized and the supreme values that make life worth living will be conserved.

This need of someone greater to look

up to and to adore is a universal need. Wherever we look we find that it is present. I have spoken of the witness of modern science to the universality of religion. It is just at this point that the evidence of this universality is most convincing. The difference between man and the animals is found in the fact that man alone has ideals, and the religious nature of man consists in the fact that in his heart of hearts he is persuaded that that which for him is ideal is also in some true sense real.

But though all men thus believe in God there is a great difference in the kind of God in whom men believe. Some men find power the most admirable thing. The ability to do as one pleases, to carry one's purposes to execution in spite of every opposition, to execute vengeance upon one's enemies, to have one's own will at any cost—this it is which seems to many men most satisfying, and it is this quality which calls forth their wonder, and their admiration in God.

And there are others to whom mystery seems the most divine thing; they love to feel themselves in the presence of some inscrutable being, so far surpassing man's capacity to comprehend or understand that his boldest thought turns back baffled from the quest, as the rays of a lantern lose themselves in the encircling fog. This sense of boundlessness, of infinitude, of deeps unfathomed, seems to many most wonderful and adorable, and it is the fact that God is such a being which commands their worship.

And to still others righteousness expresses their highest thought of God. God is the being in whom the moral

ideal after which we vainly strive here on earth is perfectly realized. God is justice personified, the mind that sees all things in their right relations, and the will that decides unvaryingly according to what he sees.

And to still others, finally, it is unselfishness which seems the most divine thing in the world. God is love, the embodiment and the supreme expression of that passion of self-devotion of which we gain faint gleams in the love of the mother for the child, or the sacrifice of the patriot for his country.

It is not enough, then, to speak of God in the abstract. We must go on to define the kind of God in whom we believe. We are interested here in the Christian conception of God, and we wish to know what there is in this conception which calls forth our worship.

But worship is only one side of religion. We need God not only that we may have someone to look up to, but that there may be someone to reach down to us as helper and friend. This too is a need of universal range. Wherever we go we find men conscious of a lack which man cannot supply. They need guidance, for there are questions which they cannot answer. They need salvation, for there are evils from which they cannot escape. Above all, they need power, for their vitality is constantly drained and must be constantly renewed if they are to meet the responsibilities and bear the burdens that each new day brings, and for this in every age men have turned to that unseen source of supply which we call God.

But here again this common need is consistent with infinite variety of detail. Faith in God has been found

among men in every stage of moral and spiritual experience. The kings of Israel cried to God for help against their enemies, for victory in battle against the Canaanite and the Assyrian. Hezekiah turned to God for the healing of his sickness, and in this he is typical of a great company of men in every age down to the last convert to Christian Science. For others it is forgiveness of sins that is the great need, some assurance that the burden of guilt from which they try in vain to escape will be lifted off and they be restored to self-respect and enabled to begin a new life of freedom and peace. Or again, it may be power for service that is desired, strength for the unceasing struggle to help men who do not want to be helped, and faith to believe that the struggle will in the end succeed.

How, then, have Christians thought of God as meeting this double need, the need of an object of worship, and the need of a source of help? What was there in God as Christ had revealed him which satisfied men's need for a realized ideal, and in what ways did the Supreme reach down to make his power practically helpful in daily life?

If we turn to the older devotional literature we find that there were three ways in which God was pictured as satisfying man's need of worship. In the first place he satisfied it through his majesty. God was a sovereign, holding all things in the hollow of his hand, ordering all things by the decree of his will. In the second place, God was righteous. Justice was of the very essence of his being, so inwrought into his nature that he could not do wrong if he would. Finally, God was loving.

Righteous as he was, uncompromising in his opposition to evil, terrible in his judgments upon sin, he was yet gracious, tender, ready to forgive those whom he had chosen for himself. So in God all the deepest needs of man's nature found their answer and satisfaction. And man could be sure that whatever changes the years might bring, the object of his adoration would never prove less adorable.

And as God furnished man with a satisfying object of worship, so also he was an ever-present source of help. There was no need felt by man for which he had not made full provision. He met the need of guidance. In the Bible he had given a clear revelation of his will and told man in plain words what he was to believe and what he was to do. He met the need of salvation. Through the atonement he had made full provision for the guilt of sin and made possible free forgiveness to all who would lay hold upon it by faith. And above and beyond all this he was present in the world by his Spirit ministering to the needs of his elect in countless ways, calling into existence a new spiritual life in regeneration, interpreting the Bible to them by the witness of his Spirit, sanctifying them more and more by the renewal of his grace, assuring them of their calling as sons of God, feeding their souls by the means of grace which he had provided in Word and sacraments, and so preparing them at last for their final destiny as children of God in the new life of his kingdom.

Here certainly are great blessings. A religion which could do this for men is not to be despised, and those of us who have been brought up under the old theology and know men and women

whose lives have been nourished by the faith it fostered will never be able to speak of its teachings in any other language than that of reverence and tenderness.

But there is another side to the picture which honesty will not suffer us altogether to overlook. These great blessings were bought at a great price. It was the price of God's universal fatherhood. Between God and man there was a barrier of distance which rendered impossible for men in general that free access to the heavenly Father which is characteristic of the life of children with their parents.

This barrier was twofold. It was in part intellectual and in part moral. Man was separated from God by his ignorance, and he was separated by his sin. What God was like, no man could know except by supernatural revelation, and this revelation, theoretically open to all in the Bible, was in fact restricted to those to whom God was pleased to grant the witness of his Spirit. To those to whom he had revealed himself through this witness God was indeed a gracious Father, loving and tender, but for the rest of mankind he remained the unknown God, or, if known at all, known only as the author of a law which man was helpless to obey and which therefore held in store only nameless terrors. Even to those who had received the divine revelation, the doctrines of the faith remained mysteries into which the mind of man could not penetrate. One must believe indeed that God was three in one, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but how this could be, one could not hope to understand, nor indeed did one need to do so.

But formidable as was the obstacle for the mind, the barrier for the conscience was more insurmountable still. Man was separated from God by his sin. God was just, and justice was thought of not as we think of it today, as the means which the all-wise and all-loving Father takes to accomplish the moral training of his children. Justice was an independent principle, inherent in the divine nature—a principle which not only expressed his opposition to sin, but also his separation from the sinner. Justice was that in God which bound him to punish every least infraction of his law with infinite doom—a doom which no penitence of man could avert, even were perfect penitence in his power. Justice, therefore, so far from being a bond which united man and God, was a barrier keeping them forever apart unless some method could be found by which God could pass over.

Such a method was, to be sure, provided by God's grace. Through the atonement of Jesus Christ a way was found to blot out the guilt of sin and to make possible the free forgiveness of the sinner. But even here the gain was won at a heavy cost. For as a result of the conception of justice to which I have already referred, the conception of love itself was perverted. It was no longer an imperious necessity inwrought into the very nature of God, defining the attitude of the Father toward every one of his children; it was an expression of the principle of sovereignty, the power of arbitrary choice. God was one who had mercy on whom he would have mercy, but who hardened whom he would. As the atonement of Christ was necessary if forgiveness was to be

possible, so the divine decree decided for whom this provision should avail. The rest remained in the outer darkness, from which there was no possibility of deliverance.

Now, I am well aware that what I have been saying will seem to many an exaggeration if not a travesty. I know very well that many ministers who hold what they call the old theology have preached a far larger and more generous gospel. I gladly recognize that the presence of God in all human life, the justice of God as an element through which he trains his children, the love of God as the expression of his inmost heart, the deepest and the most profound of all the truths of Christianity: I gladly recognize, I say, that these great convictions are the monopoly of no single age or school of theologians. In every age men who have studied their Bible and been brought into contact through it with the heart of Jesus Christ have laid hold upon the central truths of the gospel and brought them home with power to the lives of men. My point is simply that it was more difficult to do this a generation ago than it is today. There were obstacles in the way of believing in God's universal fatherhood which those who have been trained in the methods of modern science do not feel. The barrier of distance which separated God from his human child has been removed, and so the way opened for that intimate and satisfying conception of God which is the supreme gift of Christianity to mankind.

By this I do not mean simply that modern theology has emphasized the divine immanence. That is true, but irrelevant. We twentieth-century

Christians have no monopoly of the doctrine of immanence. Calvin, too, believed that God was everywhere present in his world, and that nothing was independent of his control; yet none the less God seemed to Calvin infinitely remote from multitudes of his creatures. The nearness which I have in mind is not of essence, but of character. It shows itself in feeling even more than in action. I mean that there is nothing in God's nature which separates him from any child of man. I mean that God understands man and sympathizes with him and longs to do him good. There is no individual, and there is no class of men for whom God does not care, and whom he does not wish to draw into filial relations with himself.

There are two ways in which the scientific habit has helped to bring God near. It has brought him near to the mind. There is a sense indeed in which the result of modern science has been to render us more than ever conscious of our littleness and insignificance. As we have come to understand better the vastness of the universe and the intricacy of its mechanism, we have gained a new impression of the greatness and of the wisdom of the being who is its cause. But in another sense, the effect has been just the reverse. Modern science has increased our faith in the intelligibility of the universe, and in the trustworthiness of our own faculties as a guide to truth. We have learned that when we approach the world in the spirit of faith and reverence, it yields to our advances; that when we treat it as if it were a rational world, it lends itself to rational interpretation, and how shall we account

for this, if not through the presence in and through nature of a rational cause, a being, in a true sense, like ourselves?

The presence of this common spiritual element, uniting God and man, makes possible the incarnation. The incarnation is the self-revelation of God in man. We believe that through Christ God has shown us what he himself is like, and has given us an insight into his character and purpose, which is an adequate guide for the interpretation of his Word. And he could do this because of the inner bond of which I have spoken, for if God were a being wholly unlike mankind, it would not have been possible for him to have revealed himself to man through man.

But what is more important still, modern theology has brought God near to the heart. It has removed the element of arbitrariness which has lingered so long in our thought of him. God, as we have come to believe in him today, is a consistent God. He acts according to law. That is to say, he has a uniform method, rooted in principles as unchanging as himself. He is not a being who has favorites, or who makes exceptions. He does not act according to one principle at one time, and according to another principle at another time. He does not deal with some men in terms of justice and with others in terms of love. All that he does is directed to a single end, namely, the establishment of the kingdom of God which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

This does not mean that modern theology lays less emphasis upon the justice of God than the theology of the past, but only that it conceives it in a

different way. Justice is that quality in God which expresses his inherent love of righteousness as it appears in his dealings with individual men. It is manifest in his opposition to sin as long as sin continues, but it is shown no less clearly in his forgiveness of sin when true repentance makes forgiveness possible. It makes use of punishment indeed—a punishment as inexorable as sin, and as terrible, but punishment is never an end in itself. It is the means which love uses to accomplish its supreme end—the salvation of men, and their union, one with another and with God, in the righteous life of the kingdom.

So, in many ways, modern theology has helped to clarify and purify our conception of God. It retains all that is inspiring and satisfying in the older view, while avoiding the difficulties to which it was exposed. It offers us an object of worship august and wonderful enough to satisfy every demand of the emotional nature. Is it a question of majesty? What could be more majestic than God as we apprehend him today? God is the infinite Spirit, who informs and inhabits the universe—life of its life, light of its light, directing all things according to the counsel of his will, to the far-off divine event which he has planned as the goal of all conscious life. Is it a question of righteousness? God is righteous, and the exactor of righteousness in others. He has set a standard to which he requires that all men and all nations shall conform, and that standard is the character of Christ. But above all, God is loving—loving even as Christ is loving, loving by the inner necessity of his nature, and willingly paying through all eternity the

cost that true love always exacts of the lover. What can heart desire which such a God cannot supply? Still we can sing with Watts:

Our God, our help in ages past;
Our hope in years to come
Our refuge from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.

or with Bowring:

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Now it is clear that if we have such a God as this he ought to mean more in our lives than ever before. We ought to be looking up to him more constantly, counting upon him more certainly, turning to him in every crisis of our lives for the help that we need.

But is this really true? Is it a fact that God means more in our life today than he meant in the life of our fathers? Do we turn to him more constantly for help? Are we as conscious of his presence as the outstanding factor in our lives?

I am afraid that if we were to give a truthful answer to this question it would have to be in the negative. One of the noticeable features of our day is the decline of personal religion in the old sense of the term, the loss of that sense of personal intimacy between God and his child which was so characteristic a feature of the older religion. We talk a great deal about God; we think about him not a little, but we do not feel him as real and as near, as Luther did or Wesley, not to speak of Isaiah or St. Paul.

Here is a situation which demands our most serious consideration. Those who base their teaching upon external authority may insist that they are right, however much their doctrines may seem to contradict experience; but a theology which makes practice the test of truth must stand or fall by its fruits in life. Unless the new thought of God issues in a richer experience of God it is self-condemned.

I have been trying as best I could to discover the reason for the decline of personal religion. In part, no doubt, it is a result of the increased pressure of life. Activity is the characteristic note of the modern world. Almost every day a new society is formed to render some new service or to meet some new need. On every side we hear the complaint that people are so busy they have no time to stop and think. The quiet hours that parents used to spend with their children, the time sacredly reserved for family worship, or for the reading of the Bible Sunday afternoon is crowded out by other duties which seem more pressing.

And it is not simply that we have found so much to do, but we have found so much that we are able to do. This new social and philanthropic activity has justified itself by its fruits. We have discovered that many of the evils which we once thought irremediable are capable of cure, if only we set our hands to the task. And there is nothing which appeals to a normal man or woman like work that is effective for an object that is worth while. So the very success of our practical efforts at helpfulness has, for the time, turned our thoughts away from those deeper needs which in every

age have driven men to God and kept alive in human hearts the flame of personal religion.

But after all, the real reason for the decline of which I have been speaking lies deeper. You cannot seriously give yourself to the task of trying to help your fellow-man without, sooner or later, realizing your limitations. For a time you may be content to deal with the ills that lie on the surface, to better housing conditions, to foster habits of saving, to provide opportunities of healthful amusement and the like, but presently you find that these things go only a little way. There are deeper needs which cannot thus be met—needs of inward renewal, of the transformation of character, of deliverance from selfishness and pettiness and the tyranny of habit; the need of inner contentment and peace, of a larger outlook, of a more satisfying ambition. And when we try to meet these deeper needs we soon discover how limited our resources are, and are driven back for help to God, like all those who have attempted the same tasks before us.

And this brings me to a second reason for the decline of which I have spoken, one far more fundamental and far-reaching. It is not simply that we have been too busy to seek help in God, but that we have not been sure that God could give us the help we needed, even if we were to ask him.

For what is it that we need of God? It is such help as a man would give his fellow-man, help direct, individual, personal, differing from moment to moment, from hour to hour, according to our differing needs. That is the kind of help for which our fathers turned to God

and which they were conscious of receiving from him. If he was apart from the world, transcendent, as we call it in our theological speech, it was only that he might be able the better to express his individuality and to exercise his freedom. I have spoken of the gulf that yawned between God and his creature, but it was a gulf which God could cross at any moment if he would, and which, as a matter of fact, he was constantly crossing. All that was necessary to do was to cry to God in prayer, and one could be sure that the needed help would be forthcoming.

But with the world which modern science reveals it is different. God is a God of law, that is to say, he acts everywhere and always in the same way. How can you feel toward such a God the sense of communion that you have with your fellow-man? Are we told that God is near? That is just the trouble. He is too near for us to realize his presence. Are we told that he is always the same? But it is not uniformity we want. Our need is always changing and the helper we need must meet these constant changes with a change as constant.

It is a very real difficulty that I am voicing. It lies back of the widespread attack upon the new theology as denying the supernatural and making no place for miracles. What this attack really means is the fear that if the new view of God comes to prevail the old sense of personal intimacy which characterized the religion of the past must die out, that vague feelings of awe and worship will replace that communion of will with will which is essential to the continuance of vital religion.

Now, if this fear were justified, I for one should feel that those who attacked modern theology as destructive were quite in the right. We need, not only a God to worship from afar, but a God who can help us where we need to be helped, in the changing trials and responsibilities and dangers of our changing lives. And the test by which every theology—whether old or new—must stand or fall is its ability to provide for the satisfaction of this need.

We face, then, this curious situation, that while the *conception of God* as presented in modern theology is winning and attractive, just the kind of God we should love to have as Father and Friend, the *conception of God's relation to the world* is such that we find it difficult to draw the legitimate consequences of our belief in practical helpfulness. How is this anomaly to be explained?

The root of the whole difficulty, I am persuaded, lies in the ambiguity of the term "law." Law means uniformity, but we forget that there are two kinds of uniformity. There is uniformity of action and uniformity of method, and it makes all the difference in the world which of the two we mean. Uniformity of action is inconsistent with personality. It is the uniformity of the machine which always does the same thing, because it has no option. If God be a God of law in this sense it would indeed be useless to turn to him for help, for he could not help us, if he would. For him, as for the world in which he dwells, law would be a prison from which he could not escape.

But we may use the word "law" in quite a different sense. We may use it to describe uniformity of method rather

than uniformity of action. So far from being inconsistent with personality, uniformity of this kind is the highest expression of personality. It is the mark of a consistent character that it knows how to shape means to ends; and can be trusted under any conceivable set of circumstances to do the thing that is right. The man who is under law in this sense will be constantly varying his action to meet the varying exigency, but the change will always be determined by principle and will lead therefore to results on which you can always count.

It is just so with God. When we say that he acts according to law we mean that all that he does is determined by a single consistent purpose. It is not that his acts never vary, but that his aim never varies. He has but one object, and that is to establish the kingdom of God in the world which he has made, by bringing the men and women who are its inhabitants into willing conformity to the character of Jesus Christ.

How is this purpose to be brought about. In the very same way in which Christians have always contended that it must be brought about. By *changing* whatever in the present order of things and in the lives of living men and women is inconsistent with this purpose. In other words, by new beginnings, or what our fathers were accustomed to call miracles. A miracle is an exceptional event wrought by God in the world for a moral purpose. It is the evidence of the presence in the world of a personal Spirit directing its course to a spiritual end.

It is a great mistake to think that

modern theology has no place for miracle. Modern science has indeed banished a certain conception of miracle, the conception which regards it as a purely arbitrary and isolated event without antecedents or consequences, a marvel or portent contradicting natural law, or at least, wholly unrelated to it. But in the sense in which we have just defined it as a new beginning which evidences to man in a peculiar sense the presence and the purpose of God, modern science shows us more clearly than ever before how indispensable it is for religion. All progress takes place through new beginnings. A new form appears not wholly to be explained by its antecedents, but prophetic of that which is to come after. A great man appears and sets a new standard for all succeeding generations. A flash of insight illumines the soul and through years to come we walk by the light of the heavenly vision. Saul is struck down before the gate of Damascus and the persecutor is changed into the apostle. Jesus is born in a tiny province of the Roman Empire and we date a new era in the history of mankind.

How shall we account for phenomena like these? What is their significance and meaning in the universe? This is a question which science cannot answer. It is concerned with causes, not with values. It registers the appearance of the new fact. It can determine the conditions under which it arose and describe the consequences which followed from it, but the why and wherefore is hidden from its ken. Critical scholarship may tell us who wrote the books of the Bible and when they wrote them. It may explain the literary forms they used and catalogue the materials

upon which they drew. But when it has done all this it is as far as ever from explaining the influence which the Bible has exerted upon the spiritual life of man. How came it that in its pages men have heard God speaking directly to their own souls; how account for the persistence of its influence over so many centuries and among men of such widely different races? Religion answers, it is because God is really speaking to men in the book which he has prepared for this very purpose. And this discovery of God in events and experiences which to men without the clue seem destitute of spiritual significance, lies at the heart of the religious faith in miracle.

The difficulty in the older attitude toward miracle was not that men found God actively at work in the great creative personalities and events which accompanied the birth of the new religion, but that they concentrated their attention upon his presence there to the exclusion of his activity elsewhere. They tried to draw a hard-and-fast line between the miracles of the Bible and God's methods of self-disclosure to men of other races and other ages. They failed to recognize, or at all events, adequately to emphasize, the fact that God is as truly present, if in different degree and for different purposes, in our present experience as in the experience of the past; that he is as able today as ever to make new disclosures of his will and to give new evidence of his power. What we need to do is to realize afresh the continuity of God's redemptive activity, not to see less of him in the past, but to expect more from him in the present and the future.

Now, the most familiar example of

God's creative activity in the present is prayer. Prayer is the way in which the soul of man is renewed through contact with God. Here again modern theology has not altered the facts, though it has set them in a new light. Through its revelation of the divine consistency it has removed the element of arbitrariness which often attached to the older conception of prayer. It assures us that when we draw near to God in the spirit of faith we may confidently expect response; that it is as true today as in the days of Isaiah and St. Paul that through prayer we have access to the source of all power and renew our lives from day to day.

I have in mind a dear friend, now no longer among the living, about whose memory many associations cluster. A natural leader of men, far-sighted, wise in counsel, exquisite in tact, untiring in industry, he was in the truest sense of the term a man of affairs. But I think of him most of all as a man of prayer. More than once during a season of anxiety and strain I have seen him come into the Seminary chapel to lead the morning's worship, and as he prayed I have seen his face change before my eyes and grow buoyant and radiant under the renewing influence which came to him from communion with his God. Cuthbert Hall is to many a Union Seminary student a per-

sonal embodiment of that sonnet of Trench which he loved to quote:

Lo, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in thy presence will prevail to make,
What heavy burdens from our bosom
take.

What parched grounds revive, as with a
shower!

We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;
We rise, and all, the distant and the near,
Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and
clear.

We kneel, how weak: we rise, how full of
power!

What we need, then, above all, we who call ourselves Christians, is to learn from Jesus how to pray. Jesus realized as keenly as any of us moderns the duty of service. All day long he went about doing good. He was tireless in his ministry to the needy in body and spirit, feeding the hungry, healing the sick, comforting the sorrowing, forgiving the sinful, but he knew that he could give only what he had received. And so when night fell he left his disciples and went up into the mountain or shut his closet door that in secret he might commune with the Father who seeth in secret. It is what his disciples must do if we are to recover again for our generation the consciousness of God as the central fact and the supreme good, the unfailing source of strength and of wisdom, of inspiration and of comfort, of peace and of joy.